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WORLD ORDER

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THE WORLD ISSUE OF RACE
Editorial

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THE WORLD ISSUE OF RACE

EDITORIAL

THE movements of world opinion during recent months have given to the question of race relations so vital an emphasis that it must be recognized as one of the paramount issues confronting this age.

Historically, race as immediate biological or blood bond was during a long period identical with those other bonds upon which a society rests—the bond of economic interest, of cultural unity, of religious affiliation and of that common government, whether of nation or tribe, upon which internal justice and external defense directly depends.

THE evolution of civilization has gradually separated the experience of blood kinship from the other social functions necessary to community existence. The modern nation has succeeded in dissolving age-long sources of separation and hostility—language, culture and race—and in a larger loyalty to the common institutions of law and order, the original organic family unit has abandoned its sense of exclusiveness and militant isolation.

The status of citizenship has in fact replaced blood relationship as the source of the individual's social personality throughout the greater part of the modern world. Nationality therefore represents a vast advance toward true civilization in comparison with that primitive tribalism which gave to language, culture, religion, government and the economic process an arbitrarily limited social area.

THE race problem today reveals two different aspects: it intensifies a spirit of hostility arising not from race relations but from the conflict of states—a by-product of nationalism in its negative, aggressive manifestation; and it intensifies that antagonism among citizens of the same state whose ultimate source is

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economic competition. The race problem, then, stands as a major world issue for the sole reason that it supplies a constant source of instinctive hatred and jealousy, a mighty reservoir of unthinking antagonism, employed to deepen and to justify every social hostility created by the international chaos in which we live. It is one form of the primitive within every individual and every social group springing to action when the bestial-human element is aroused.

THE Bahá'í approach to this problem of race relations is spiritual and therefore universal. Bahá-'u'lláh interprets the true history of religion to mean that man's social personality, at its highest and best, derives not from one's status as citizen but from one's status as member of one divine Faith.

Christendom, when true to the teaching of its Founder, was a community of believers who admitted one another into a relationship far more intimate and sacred than that of the biological family, far more significant than that of a common legal government, far more influential than that of a mutual trade or economic class. Faith in its purity unites the souls of men, and unites them for peace in all contacts and associations, and therefore faith is the sole human tie which can remain unbroken under the onslaught of political, economic, cultural or biological antagonism.

The Bahá'ís of the world, because they share one divine Faith that knows no boundary of race or creed or nation or class, have already within their own religious community, spread throughout forty countries, solved the race problem which outside this community poisons the very springs of human emotion. When one becomes a Bahá'í, one enters a new and higher realm of reality where the world's traditional values have no influence. As among the early Christians, as among the pioneers of Islam, the Bahá'ís are members of a new body, and in their spiritual relationship they leave their artificial social relationships forever behind.

Once again the holy and incorruptible flame of faith has been enkindled in the heart of the world, lighted by the One who brings the heavenly fire to a cold and darkened earth. Once again a community of believers is created whose manners and customs are reflections of the soul and not of the flesh. This new status of believer revolutionizes all human intercourse because it is only the Fatherhood of God which can establish the brotherhood of man.

H. H.

In Bahá'u'lláh, religion has become not alone the power making for personal purity and devotion but also the universal philosophy which interprets the process and the aim of man's historical development. In this article is expounded the Bahá'í teaching on the rise and decline of civilizations.

A WORLD FAITH

Studies in the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh

IV. CYCLES OF CIVILIZATION

By N. F. WARD

In whatever direction we train our thought, we find society subject to the immutable law of change. Organized society, whether ancient or modern, has undergone profound alteration from that of the family to that of the mechanized era of the present day. The march of intellect has seasoned its knowledge for a period in the culture of a people — rudimentary and laborious in original form—until the physical life has reached automatism with most of the energy transformed by machines.

It has been suggested that we have become the slaves of machines rather than the reverse; yet no thinking person would revert to former modes of communication, transportation and thought. In fact, with the proper utilization of mechanism the greatest progress yet made lies in the acceleration of intelligence and its control for the benefit of increasing humanity.

I.

Evolution of society continues to be conditioned largely by environment, modes of communication, transportation and government. Civilization continues to be a periodic movement of social life toward a perfect articulation of the relations between man and man; man and God; man and his creatures—the arts and sciences. For the treatment of this subject we can consider civilization as being *the way of living which has been attained by a people at any one period.*

The human race is at a stage in history when the light of intelligence has shone with greater brilliance than at any prior time. No better opportunity to learn the lesson which history teaches exists than in the present era, because the panorama of the human race stands arrayed in all of its elemental constituents. If history be taken as a synthesis of man's progress towards a composite society rather than a record of successive events, civilizations may be seen to

play a definite rôle in the evolution of human society.

The succession of the family by the tribe, which received its life blood from the family, in turn, preserved the families. The tribal society was the modus operandi of rudimentary life. Wandering tribes, notably with the nomadic tendencies, became a menace to the unity and welfare of a race limited in numbers. The next step in the evolution of society was the nation, which was founded upon the loyalty of tribes with common racial extraction or other community of interests.

THE fourth step, which is inevitable, but is yet to be taken if the gains of each nation are to be consolidated and security be vouchsafed for the world, is the federation of the nations. The plan for this world order was given more than seventy-five years ago by Bahá'u'lláh. Reflection upon this matter will show the wisdom of this step. The "dream of empire" which some nations nurture in this day is as much a menace to the peace and security of the human race as the marauding tribes of Israel and Arabia were to a race in its infancy. Extension of the sphere of influence by any nation without the voluntary submission and cooperation of the subject nation is fraught with greater ill-will and conflict than the economic gain is worth. Enslaving of people cannot long endure in a society half free and half slave. A humanity divided against itself cannot measure a lasting gain, either economic or otherwise, without endangering fealty to government. Humanity divided against itself finds only a widening breach between the nations.

Nations, which are insufficient unto themselves, remain part of the organic whole and must rely upon cooperation among their members to obtain international accord. Nations which develop their internal affairs with their own abilities in their own way are more to be prized when they entrust their external affairs to a strong federation of nations which is unbiased and unflinching in carrying out its edicts for establishment of universal peace, even with the sword if necessary. Nations would use a more intelligent method than reliance upon force when it becomes an international law that violation of the sanctions of a duly constituted federation of nations means opposition of the rest of the nations for the nation with selfish designs. In fact, when all nations are bound to crush that nation which tries to violate the law, the maleficent nation would turn its energies towards improvement of the race[1]. Unless there is a method of bridling self-appointed empire builders, humanity stands before the precipice of oblivion. Nothing can obliterate life more completely than munitions and poison gases when they are loosed by unprincipled and unchecked nations.

A STAGE has been reached in the development of the race when certain alternatives must be faced with a constructive action. In the light of what has been said and what the conscience of every living person dictates, the choice of one of the fol-

1—For complete statement of the method of the militant establishment of peace, see "Divine Forces of Civilization", pp. 74 to 75.

lowing means of cooperation becomes imperative:

1. Stake all energy and intelligence upon the security gained by the forceful methods of war. The screech of death-dealing munitions has always been the voice of nations maddened with the lust for power at the expense of the fittest persons in their body-politic.

2. Establishment of a world federation of nations whose common pact ensures physical and economic security for all by means of a world faith which transcends the limitations of race, creed, and social superfluities. Within this faith resides the regeneration power which establishes the spiritual equilibrium for racial, religious, economic and social aspirations of the race.

II.

If the present day is any index, there is evidence that whatsoever goals civilization is seeking seem to recede as they are approached. The war to save democracy, which involved the principal nations of the globe, has done more to bankrupt the democratic form of government and establish distrust of its tenets than any single movement to cleanse from it the most vitiating scourge—that of unprincipled demagogery. The worth of an organized, disciplined citizenry remains the life blood of government. But when it succumbs to mob rule it ceases to be virile and useful and is a real menace to progress.

The lessons of history demonstrate that there are very attainable goals which have effectively emanated from recurring personalities. These personalities are unexplainable by any mode of reasoning and yet establish within a short period of time an enduring civilization. Their power is one which rulers might envy, but is not alone a creature of environment. The substances which are molded into these civilizations are physical laws and forces tempered with controlling genius of the prophet. To illustrate: Who in the tribes of Israel reached the station of Moses to the degree of uniting Bani Israel and subsequently integrating it into a nation at peace with itself; a nation unshattered by the impact of countless nations? This power raised a subject race in Egypt to the rank foremost among nations. We venture the thought that no temporal ruler attained the advancement of people so diverse in racial extraction in such a brief period of civilization. The inspiration of these children of Israel, who were in bondage and captivity in the land of Egypt under the tyranny of the Copts, became articulate with the appearance of Moses. He singly and alone conducted this race to the station of honor and progress. History of the East gives evidence of the travels of Greek philosophers to study with the Hebrews the philosophy and basis of civil law which had been codified for the first time in recorded history by Moses in the ten commandments. Along all lines of advancement by which a people are characterized, this nation achieved progress. The possession of the elements for progress could be summarized for this civilization as for those which succeeded it, when we witness the evolution of society of which history is its own record. The degree of progress of the

great nations may be summarized by the perfection attained in the following particulars:

1. Faith — Recognition of the truly great one of the era which he foreshadows by his universal teachings which take effect. In the infancy of the race the universal teachings are applied to limited areas but become more inclusive with the widening sphere of influence.

2. Language — Development of a singular means of conveying thoughts and ideas.

3. Shelter and clothes — accomodation to rigors of climate.

4. Heat—for warmth and power as a means of combatting physical limitations of environment.

5. Government — regulation of material, social, and economic resources for well-being of body-politic.

6. Implements of war and peace —functioning to harmonize diverse elements in society.

7. Development in the arts — sculpture, painting, music, literature, architecture.

8. Application of sciences—practical use of mathematics, physics and chemistry, medicine, agriculture, and engineering.

9. Utilization of power—transfer of physical burden to domesticated animals; harnessing of natural resources for benefit of the race; transfer of skill to machines, and regulation of machine production and distribution.

If the tests, just enumerated, were applied to ancient nations their progress seems all the more miraculous because the facility of communication, transportation, and sciences was insignificant in comparison to modern society. The accomplishments of the Hindu civilization from 800 B.C. to 1200 A.D. as recounted in "Hindu Achievements of Science" by Sarkar demonstrate the advance of this people in mathematics, kinetics, astronomy, physics—especially heat, light, optics, and magnetism, chemistry, medicine, animal husbandry, natural history of precious stones and ores, and plants.

The developments of the arts and science of Egypt and Mesopotamia are more commonly known. Imperial Rome remains the most vivid example of civilization, in spite of all the material advantages, losing the balance between material and spiritual values. The unity attained in these nations was based upon exercise of superior force and domination. The subjugated peoples became believers under penalty of the sword. History records the rotting of Rome at its core and the subsequent regeneration of that civilization by the disciples of Christ. For in the center of this once powerful nation, we find Paul, the disciple of Christ, a martyr to the cause of a new society in the making. The vanguards of this new society were the very antithesis of their persecutors.

These apostles had only the power of the Word of God to protect them. They had neither numbers nor weapons of defense like their Roman masters. Yet all are aware of the true ascendancy of the Christian civilization.

By the same token when the power, which gave birth to a more unified and wonderful society, is beclouded with certain doctrines, which limit it to petty non-essentials, only the husk of empty creed remains. Then the call back to the pure basic teachings is given by the arch-types of humanity — the prophets. These beings have been the educators of the new civilization and in each instance have attained unity among the diverse elements of society to which they came. The early history of all great faiths reveals the loyalty among the followers even to the extent of laying down their own lives for one another. How much less has been this conviction when the creeds have widened the breach of understanding between the followers of the one Christ.

A regeneration of the spirit of the ancient faith has been renewed periodically according to the requirements of the race by Moses, Buddha, Zoroaster, Christ, Muhammad, the Báb, and Bahá'u'lláh at approximately 1000 year intervals and will continue so long as limited human minds revert to other methods of dealing than dictated by the Golden Rule, which incidentally is found in every religious faith. These prophets have taught by their lessons of suffering each nation and individual the way and the life. They have born their cross of sacrifice for humanity's ultimate good. Their only reward is found in the civilizations to which they gave their name and dress. This highest station has never been attained by other mortals.

THIS PLANETARY TASK

By Stanwood Cobb

Would you enlarge the pattern of your lives?
Love one another!
He who for self too much contrives
Manages to smother
The soul within him.
If we would fill our life's cup to the brim
And rejoice the angels of our birth,
We must love our fellows every one,
And hasten to establish unity upon this strife-torn earth;
There is no foreignness beneath the sun.
The divine bounties follow him who ever strives
To be to all mankind a brother.
Then take no rest until this planetary task is done.

Has a pathological condition overtaken a large proportion of mankind? In the following article a sensitive and creative mind seeks to penetrate beneath superficial economic and political symptoms to the fundamental vitiation of the human material of which civilization is composed.

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WORLD INSANITY—IS THERE A CURE?

By STANTON A. COBLENTZ

•

If the modern world has not gone completely mad, it has at least approached near enough to madness to arouse those of us who still value our sanity.

Of recent years we have heard the questioning voices in an increasing chorus: "What is wrong with society? . . . What is wrong with civilization? . . . Have we reached the end of a cycle, and will the inevitable sequel be decline and death?" To understand the reason for such inquiries, we need not turn to any single episode such as the Great War, nor to the phenomenon of any particular economic depression, the cries spring from deep-sunken sources, of which each successive social disaster is the sign rather than the cause. More and more it is coming to be realized that something is basically wrong with the structure of modern life; but diagnosticians have still to reach an agreement as to what is wrong, and as to what remedy if any might prove efficacious. Some, such as Oswald Spengler, maintain that decay is inherent in the very nature of civilization, and that there is nothing we can do to prevent it; others, less pessimistic, advocate some particular program of economic reform, such as syndicalism, or communism, or international trade agreements, or the Single Tax. But except for these two schools—those that believe in the futility of all effort, and those that look for relief through an economic or economic-political gateway, there appear to be none that have attempted to grapple with the problem in its entirety.

Yet there is a middle path which, if rarely or never followed, seems to me to offer a fruitful lane of inquiry. Not agreeing with those who hold that we must sit by supinely while the storm-waves drive us to the rocks, I none the less do not believe that we must seek the remedy in economic or political transformation. To me it seems that most of the efforts and theories directed toward the reconstruction of society have been efforts and theories in the wrong direction;

while, even if their aim has been correct, their penetration has been insufficient, and they have at most succeeded in scratching the surface. And this, I believe, is because they have been founded on a misconception as to the root-source of human conduct; because they have mistaken the outer layers for the depths, the effect for the cause, the excrescence for the reality, and so have proceeded somewhat like a physician who would relieve his patient's need for food by cutting out the stomach —or like an animal breeder who would keep his bulls from goring one another by increasing the size and attractiveness of their stalls.

Just as the impulse that drives the bulls to the encounter is not connected with the quality of their food or of their housing accomodation, so the impulse that moulds human society is not, in my conception, concerned first of all with the struggle for a livelihood. Rather, there is a more subtle and more deeply moving lever that works silently, invisibly, but powerfully to produce world-forming results: the lever of beliefs and ideas, of standards, thoughts, ideals, prejudices, superstitions, traditions and philosophies. It is the views of a people which, whether barbarous or advanced, grotesque or beautiful, monstrous or sublime, gain the ascendancy over their actions, and which, instilled in childhood and fortified by custom and example, are the dominant features in shaping not only the career of the individual but the fabric of society. This is not to say that there are no other potent forces: that the reverse process does not occasionally occur; that the accidents of climate and geography and the chances of racial propinquity and a thousand other elements both calculable and incalculable do not have some share in moulding most civilizations. But one may make such concessions, and yet not affect the central proposition that the underlying influence, sometimes obscured, often forgotten, but never wholly obliterated, has normally been the code of thought, the mental outlook of a people. And, accordingly, one may conclude that no fundamental modification in the social or economic order is possible without a corresponding modification in the system of beliefs.

I AM well aware that in sponsoring this position I am challenging giants. The contrary conception, variously known as "economic determinism" and "the economic interpretation of history," has gained a powerful foothold on recent thought largely owing to the position of Karl Marx—and, by an irony that its originator could never have designed, has tended to disprove itself by its very success in moulding the actions of its believers. While there has been some difference of opinion among interpreters of Marx as to whether he has considered the economic factor the exclusive element in social evolution, his own words would seem sufficiently unambiguous; in his *Critique of Political Economy,* he refers to the economic structure of society as "the real foundation, on which rise legal and political superstructures and to which corres-

pond definite forms of social consciousness"; and this statement he clarifies by adding that, "The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life."

Here, then, would seem to be the focus about which our inquiries must revolve; for if it be indeed true that the social and spiritual processes are a mere outgrowth of modes of production, then obviously all that would be necessary for social betterment is a readjustment of the modes of production. But if, on the other hand, the social organism is more largely the product of mental and spiritual than of economic states, it should be apparent that we wander off the trail when we call attention chiefly to economics.

WITHIN the limits of a moderate-sized article, obviously, it would be impossible to offer conclusive proof in support of either side of the argument; a voluminious work might well prove inadequate for the purpose. All that I shall attempt, therefore, is to indicate briefly some of the main considerations which lead me to my anti-Marxian conclusion.

No matter from what point of view we glance back over the course of social evolution, one fact will immediately be apparent: we cannot maintain that the growth of society could have moved in no other channel than that which it has actually followed. It would be difficult if not impossible for any sage, glancing at any race or people at the beginnings of its career, and, observing only its physical surroundings and its means of a livelihood, to foretell the details of its subsequent development. What seer, for example, gazing at the Mexican plateau and noting the simple agricultural methods of the people, could have seen implicit therein the blood-offerings of the Aztecs? What observer, viewing the peasants of Europe tilling their lands and the artisans and scholars taking their way through the medieval towns, could have known that the Inquisition would scatter smoke and terror across the countryside? What beholder could have gazed at the early Chinese landscape, the farms and the cities, and perceived that ancestor-worship must prove an almighty sovereign over the destinies of the people? Or what critic could have surveyed Elizabethan England and known that the land must become grimy with chimneys and the cities grow noisome and fetid with huddled factory workers?

In all cases, were one to look only at the way in which the people labored and consumed, the way in which they produced corn and cotton or thatched cottages or leather, one would be peering merely at the husk, which would tell nothing of latent possibilities, any more than the skull of Shakespeare would reveal the passions and philosophy of Hamlet. Whether with regard to demon-offerings in China, human sacrifice in Mexico, factory methods in England, or any of numerous other practices or systems, one conclusion is inescapable: there has been no compulsion in the external world forcing human development into the

course it has followed; the explanation must be sought in the ideas and psychology of man.

THROUGHOUT the entire range of human life, the truth of this statement finds vivid illustration. Had the Crow Indians, let us say, never developed a faith in visions, they would not have accorded prestige and power to the vision-seer; had the Dyaks of Borneo not had confidence in omens, they would not have waited for the omen birds before planting their crops; had the medieval Franks not believed in the efficacy of a super-natural judgment, they would not have permitted opposing leaders to settle their disputes by means of duels; had the priest-king of certain Congo tribes not been thought to be surrounded with powerful *mana,* he would not have been invested with tabus that gave him unlimited authority; had malign and incalculable power not been ascribed to disease-demons, the medicine-man would not have risen to political authority among the North American Indians; had the reality and malevolence of witches not been taken for granted, the "peaiman" of savage South America would not have gained undisputed control over his fellows; had the existence of ghosts not been acknowledged, peoples throughout the earth would not have left offerings of food and drink, of broken crockery and of living victims to the shades; had the desirability of leaving worshippers behind one not similarly been conceded, the process of adoption and the consequent institution of inheritance would not have originated in many lands.

And so on throughout the entire range of human experience. From the ancestor-worship of the Chinese to the nationalism of the modern world; from the restraints which the savage imposes on himself through dread of evil spirits to the restraints civilized man inflicts by his industrial methods, we find developments that *need not have been* so far as any factor in nature is concerned—so far as the necessity for survival is involved. The *supposed* necessity for survival, however, is of immense importance, whether in the case of the savage who fears to perish of witchcraft unless he peforms certain magical ceremonies, or of the civilized factory owner who dreads to perish of competition unless he subjects his workers to overlong hours—in both instances, obviously, it is the belief rather than the actuality that dominates.

It is true that in many cases, as in that of the factory owner, economic forces will seem to intrude. But almost always they will be found to be economic forces controlled by ideas rather than by any outer compulsion. Thus, it may be pointed out that human victims are offered to the gods among many agricultural peoples, who desire to insure the fertility of the soil—but in view of the fact that agricultural operations have been conducted in various parts of the earth without such sacrifices, it will hardly be contended that the offerings are a necessity of the agricultural mode of production; nor, again, considering how often human victims have been immolated among pre-

dominantly military peoples, will it be argued that agriculture is the sole incentive to the custom. It is, in fact, the mere *occasion* rather than the *cause,* much as a clear day may be the occasion rather than the cause of a picnic party or of a hunting expedition: the beliefs that gave rise to agricultural sacrifices have in themselves nothing to do with agriculture, but are connected with pre-existing ideas of ghosts and demons and avenging spirits or gods that require placation. The mere fact that the offerings are not universal wherever farming is found would suffice to show that they must be explained not by modes of production but by modes of thought.

The same may be said of most other institutions that apparently have an economic basis. The caste system of India may have indeed been occupational in origin, but it was the doctrine of rebirth and *karma* that made it seem just and so gave it an enduring hold; the Japanese caste system, whereby skinners, tanners, and other such workers were formerly held unworthy of association with the mass of men, may likewise be traced to occupational sources, yet the background of the system was the Buddhist belief that made the handlers of carcasses abhorrent. In a similar way, turning to the modern western world, we find that actual social and international developments are not connected with the economic background except by the network of ideas; it is apparent—as is attested by the philanthropically managed yet economically successful mills of Robert Owen — that the industrial system need not have taken the direction it did take; and it is easily demonstrable that modern military expansion, with its culmination in the World War, would not have been possible except for certain ideas connected with national aggrandizement and national honor, coupled with the absence of ideas regarding international morality.

Aside from scientific views and principles, there are three great sets of beliefs that have profoundly influenced the development of the modern world: the acquisitive ideal, the mechanistic ideal with its acquisitive associations, and the national ideal.

Yet these are not to be regarded as the sole culprits in producing the anti-social tendencies and the industrial and international cleavage of the present day. For they could not have flourished and have sown the seeds of disaster, except for certain accompanying ideas,—ideas connected with man's general outlook toward his fellow man and toward the universe. Had space permitted, we might have traced the importance of the religious or cosmic outlook in moulding social institutions not only among primitives, but in the ancient, the medieval, and the early modern world; while, turning to the effects of science, we would have had to conclude that, in one fundamental, modern man does not differ from his predecessors — his civilization must reflect his ideas about the universe around him. Be he freethinking philosopher or orthodox believer; be he deist or atheist,

vitalist or mechanist—in all cases alike the life he leads will show the influence of his dominant point of view. If he holds that the present existence is all in all, and that the sensible man will drain his full draught of enjoyment, then his treatment of his fellows and his part in upbuilding the social life will be widely different than if he maintains, let us say, the doctrine of individual responsibility based on the faith in a succession of lives. And if he holds that man is but a chance product of physico-chemical forces,—a spark subordinate to the matter that engendered it, —then one may expect him to have less respect for human rights and human life than if he believes that there is a divine essence burning in each of us.

All this is stated not in support of any particular philosophical or religious point of view, but merely in sober analysis of the forces oppressing modern man. He has been living, as we all know, in an age of intellectual doubt, when mechanistic theories have bred a sense of futility and made any grasping at the ideal seem pointless; he has been driven inward upon himself rather than outward toward a world that has seemed barren of kindness and meaning; he has sought refuge in material facts, in material accumulations, and has striven by a monstrous extension of the acquisitive impulse to satisfy the vague craving for something of enduring worth . . . Yet not until he wins a more wholesome philosophy will he regain his balance, and turn from the crass self-indulgence, the corruption, the rapaciousness that are the bane of the modern world.

By way of evidence of the truth of this assertion, let us review a few well known effects of the present system.

We see legislators and executives betraying their constituents for the sake of their purses. We see diplomats betraying the cause of world harmony for the sake of political advantage. We see judges buying the right to administer justice; we see wealthy corporations dealing with human material as they might with tin or iron; we see unemployment dominant because of the efficiency of production, but observe no successful effort to apportion the amount of labor equitably among the available laborers. We see government helpless if not apathetic in the face of public distress; we see an inequality that gives to one percent of the property owners one-third of the wealth of the most affluent country on earth; we see organized gangs preying upon legitimate trade by means of gun-protected "rackets"—and we find great cities unable or unwilling to meet this challenge to government. And among the nations we see still more unsalutary conditions; we witness devastating wars, of no conceivable advantage to any country, and not originally wanted by any—and we know that the Powers prepare for further and even more devastating conflicts. And all the while we observe the masses acquiescent, lethargic, mutely resigned, or cynically indulgent of the system that is grinding them to bits.

A sorry picture all in all! and one

Pacific School of Religion

that may make our successors regard our own era as not vastly superior to the Church-ridden Middle Ages or the witch-ridden seventeenth century. But what is the fundamental fault at the roots of the whole catalogue of iniquities? Obviously, it is in the state of mind of civilization. It is that one fundamental set of truths is not regarded, that one order of values is not taken into account, —the value of man as man, the worth of the feeling, suffering human spirit, the respect for the human entity in its deeper or more spiritual sense. Blinded by the mists of the acquisitive, befuddled by mechanism and duped by the cult of visible gods, we forget that all that really counts in man is his own inner being; that this is the only reality we know or can ever know, the only factor that need ultimately be considered. Strangely, we have mistaken the end for the means, the servant for the master, the worshipper for the god; the external world, though in its own nature it is but the tool of life, has been converted into the object; the feeling, knowing, perceiving part of us is disregarded in the name of that which is merely felt and perceived. Hence we rear mountains of possessions upon the sagging sands of ruin, and do not realize that we sacrifice that which matters for the sake of that which matters hardly at all.

THE essence of the situation is that, for all our vaunted individualism, we lack a true respect for the individual. Since scientific materialism has shown us little dignity in life and no meaning in the universe, we lack a conception which gives dignity or meaning to the individual life. Accordingly, we act as if—beyond the satisfactions of the moment—there is no object in existence. Each of us tends to become ingrowing within the shell of self; each tends to become callous and cold, and to assume that there is no reality in the feelings and sufferings of others; that the laws of life and struggle counsel us to act without reference to others. And the consequence is social chaos. The politician is led to sacrifice the interests of the electors to his prospects of personal advancement; the electors are induced to vote for politicians known to be corrupt, for the reason that anticipated personal favors seem to be the only issues at stake; manufacturers with armor plate or poison gas to sell do their part toward fostering preparedness and precipitating war, because they can imagine no final good beyond their own capital; while diplomats pursue their fraudulent manipulations to subdue weaker adversaries, or a strong country invades a smaller, since the current creed pays no reverence to the human values of weaker neighbors.

Such is the direction in which—as if by a *reductio ad absurdum*—we have been drifting as the logical culmination of several philosophies: the acquisitive standards of many centuries, the individualism of Adam Smith and other utilitarian thinkers of the eighteenth century and after, and the mechanistic theories of the scientist, which would argue purpose, meaning and spirit out of the universe.

The result is that the forms and institutions of the modern world matter but little; they are vitiated by the quality of the human material, which is paralyzed by a pernicious way of thought. Of what account is it, for example, that a system of bank supervision is theoretically excellent —if a bank examiner be corrupt, the perfections of the system may be of little avail. Or what is the practical significance of the most excellent laws regulating judicial appointments or prosecutions for fraud?—if the men in charge be ruled by anti-social principles, it will not matter much what the statute books have to say. And so throughout the entire range of modern life. By changing particular institutions, we may accomplish a little now and then: we may grant relief to certain of the needy, alleviate intolerable conditions or effect a closer approach to equality—but at most we will only be able to touch the surface of life. Under any other political system, what guaranty would we have that the officials would not betray the people? Under any other economic system, how be certain that those in power would not seek their own exaltation or aggrandizement?

Our only safeguard, manifestly, must be in men rather than in a man-made system. But there can be no safeguard in men except by reason of their ideas and ideals,—ideas and ideals that must lead from an egocentric toward an altruistic point of view, from an individual outlook toward a social perspective, and from a thwarting and a narrowing cosmic belief toward a vision that will invest life with new dignity and purpose.

This article grew out of the realization that to bring the creative element back into our practical lives has become beyond the capacity of the average civilized adult. Its exaltation of the dance as a source of expression of group life echos the wisdom of the ancients.

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EXPRESSION OF GROUP LIFE

By Winifred Duncan

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Perhaps never in the history of the world has there been such a ferment of activity among the middle aged members of society as exists today.

The adult world has awakened, sharply, to the necessity of doing something about life and it has let loose upon the world a flood of thought, conversation, lecturing and literature which is stimulating beyond words.

And what of the younger generation? The instinct of youth is not toward prolonged thought but toward action—a clear, direct, fearless

translation of idea into fact—of idealism into life. And between our thought today and our life there is a tragic, silent gulf. We are used to it, but to the young must not this discrepancy be very evident and rather frightening?

We preach a return to simple living and to the utilization of the creative forces within us; but the automobiles and the radio shriek and roar within and around our homes in ever increasing numbers; more and more our young throng to the vicarious emotionalism of the cinema; more and more are the fresh impressions of youth blurred by the reading of complicated books written to defend a complicated civilization.

The adult says: "Time and evolution will change all this; in the meantime we must adapt and do the best we can."

Have we not perhaps become so used to living in the future that we forget that eager youth is living *now—now*—and that the future can not go one step beyond the vision which we give our children now? They *are* the future. What about it?

We talk a great deal about group activity but just what training in group activity are our children getting? Baseball, foot ball, tennis, artificial "returns to nature" in the form of boy scout activities; but how many of them know how to get together in spring and raise a vegetable garden? How many can amuse themselves by creating folk dances and producing their own music for them? How many of them know how to fix the plumbing or make furniture or cook meals? Yet this is the fundamental texture of life; this is what simple living and group living is about and these are the things that every normal child loves.

Life as we live it today is sweeping us farther and farther away from these realities and therefore farther from a real connection with the universe in whose bosom we lie, and like lost children we turn to religion and to prayer, forgetting that to live rightly *is* prayer, and that to act creatively is religion and that the two states of being cannot be separated.

The upholders of our present commercial civilization say, and rightly, that to return to the conditions of a medieval peasantry is absurd—and so it is, because European peasantry, however picturesque, is stupid and static; but an intelligent return to simple conditions of living is a quite different matter. It is a question of cultivating a taste for simple things, and, hardest of all, of voluntarily accepting the fact that most of the luxuries which we have, we do not need and would be far happier without. Every great teacher in the world has lived this truth in his life; Christ wandered through Galilee on foot; Buddha walked out of a life of luxury and wandered about India with a begging bowl; 'Abdu'l-Bahá spent half His life in a prison cell and came forth radiant with a richness of experience which we cannot even understand.

Is it not a sign of our emotional and spiritual poverty that we cling so to the paraphernalia of life and have not the courage to step out of it of our own accord? We wait for

the catastrophe of war and a broken-down government to achieve for us what should be a spiritual conviction and not an external necessity.

What has all this to do with the dance? The dance is, of all the arts, the only one which is primarily a group expression of life; it is the only one which does not necessitate elaborate equipment, and it is the only one which is a direct translation of experience, without an intervening medium. Singing, which is also direct, should be a part of the dance, for this creates a unity of self-expression which does not depend on any externals for its artistic fulfillment.

To bring back the creative element into our practical lives seems to be, at present, almost beyond the civilized human being; everything indicates that the first step toward this is through the abstractions of art; everywhere one sees real efforts in this direction and practically none in the more practical realm of economics and the problems of wage earnings; these are still inextricably interwoven with the profit making and commercialized spirit of our age.

Therefore it would seem that the quickest way to arouse creativeness once more in the young and give them some channel of liberation, is through art. In this attempt, dancing lags far behind. Art schools and little theatres flourish on all sides, but one seeks in vain for out-door arenas built with the intention of producing dance drama, as it was conceived by the Greeks and is still practised throughout the Orient, in religious ceremonials.

The entire West has confused the art of the dance with acrobatics and gymnastics and the over-emphasis in this country on competitive sport has so dulled the bodily sensitiveness of our young people that it is almost impossible to quiet them to a point where they can experience motion as an aesthetic, religious and spiritual expression. Any savage in central Africa knows more about this than we do. To them, and quite rightly, motion is a medium for experiencing ecstasy — usually religious ecstasy. It is a curious fact that this sort of motion has a far more beneficial effect upon the health than any amount of violent gymnastics, for it awakens glandular activity, quickens and distributes the circulation, quiets the nerves and in mysterious ways connects the entire human organism with the cosmic currents of the larger universe, so that the moving body becomes a channel for psychic experience which can never be achieved through violence.

This is why dancing has been almost entirely an art for women; gymnastics, as understood by men, are definitely an enemy to this art, and it is only the exceptionally sensitive young person of either sex who can be taught the real essence of what dancing is.

A beginning has been made in the wide-spread popularity of folk dancing, where at least group motion is experienced, but there is something fundamentally childish in copying the crude stampings and whirlings of peasant communitities of other nationalities. They are chiefly interesting as the spontaneous expression

of the psyche of a definite nationality, but in slavishly copying them we miss the point, which is to create our own folk dancing and express our own psyche. Again, the creative instinct of the American child is frustrated, in the effort to turn it into a red Indian, or a Cheko-Slovakian, or what not. This is not art but imitation, of which we have far too much already.

It is very easy to talk eloquently about all this but very difficult to do anything about it. It would seem that what our young people need today most of all, as a preliminary to any creative living, is a course in aesthetics; in the appreciation of nature; of beauty; of the rhythm in things. In place of our mania for the bigger and the better, we need an appreciation of the smaller and the finer. There are hundreds of "professional" dancers who can stand on their heads and do cartwheels; there are practically none who can raise their right hand toward heaven with a gesture so simple and so significant that it arouses reverence in the beholder.

Why was it that Isadora Duncan, whose "technique" was negligable and who had a large and rather clumsy body, could move an audience of thousands to tears by her motionless presence in the middle of a stage?

It was because she understood the spiritual significance of motion. At her slightest gesture she filled the stage with motion—and with emotion. She did not just dance; she stepped into a great swirl of cosmic motion of which she was eternally conscious, and which in her simplest movements she made visible to others; and she did it quietly, gently and without effort.

Young people should be taught the beauty of impersonal movement, in groups, to beautiful and religious music; they should not be allowed to listen any longer to jazz, which has destroyed in a whole generation the capacity for understanding music.

The whole texture of our outward civilization today is a mirror of the insensitiveness of our inner lives; there is no hope of changing it until we create human beings who will simply refuse to stand it any longer; then and then only will economic systems readjust themselves, and it is the crowning glory of the Bahá'í Cause that it is steadily working toward this end, for what is the love which we are learning to feel for each other, but an increased sensitiveness?

Surely the only creative education is the one which stops cramming children with complicated facts, and begins to teach them the inner significance of things, which is rhythmic, quiet and dynamic, and makes not for power but for comprehension.

These excerpts from the Book of Certitude gather together the threads of all past religions, and reveal the oneness of their Source and aim.

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THE TESTIMONY OF PROVIDENCE

WORDS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

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CONSIDER the past. How many, both high and low, have, at all times, yearningly awaited the advent of the Manifestations of God in the sanctified persons of His chosen Ones. How often have they expected His coming, how frequently have they prayed that the breeze of Divine mercy might blow, and the promised Beauty step forth from behind the veil of concealment, and be made manifest to all the world. And whensoever the portals of grace did open, and the clouds of divine bounty did rain upon mankind, and the light of the Unseen did shine above the horizon of celestial might, they all denied Him, and turned away from His face—the face of God Himself. . . .

Reflect, what could have been the motive for such deeds? What could have prompted such behavior towards the Revealers of the beauty of the All-Glorious? Whatever in days gone by hath been the cause of the denial and opposition of those people hath now led to the perversity of the people of this age. To maintain that the testimony of Providence was incomplete, that it hath therefore been the cause of the denial of the people, is but open blasphemy. How far from the grace of the All-Bountiful and from His loving providence and tender mercies it is to single out a soul from amongst all men for the guidance of His creatures, and, on one hand, to withhold from Him the full measure of His divine testimony, and, on the other, inflict severe retribution on His people for having turned away from His chosen One! Nay, the manifold bounties of the Lord of all beings have, at all times, through the Manifestations of His Divine Essence, encompassed the earth and all that dwell therein. Not for a moment hath His grace been withheld, nor have the showers of His loving-kindness ceased to rain upon mankind. Consequently, such behavior can be attributed to naught save the petty-mindedness of such souls as tread the valley of arrogance and pride, are lost in the wilds of remoteness, walk in the ways of their idle fancy, and follow the dictates of the leaders of their faith. Their chief concern is mere opposition; their sole desire is to ignore the

truth. Unto every discerning observer it is evident and manifest that had these people in the days of each of the Manifestations of the Sun of Truth sanctified their eyes, their ears, and their hearts from whatever they had seen, heard, and felt, they surely would not have been deprived of beholding the beauty of God, nor strayed far from the habitations of glory. But having weighed the testimony of God by the standard of their own knowledge, gleaned from the teachings of the leaders of their faith, and found it at variance with their limited understanding, they arose to perpetrate such unseemly acts. . . .

Consider Moses! Armed with the rod of celestial dominion, adorned with the white hand of Divine knowledge, and proceeding from the Párán of the love of God, and wielding the serpent of power and everlasting majesty, He shone forth from the Sinai of light upon the world. He summoned all the peoples and kindreds of the earth to the kingdom of eternity, and invited them to partake of the fruit of the tree of faithfulness. Surely you are aware of the fierce opposition of Pharaoh and his people, and of the stones of idle fancy which the hands of infidels cast upon that blessed Tree. So much so that Pharaoh and his people finally arose and exerted their utmost endeavor to extinguish with the waters of falsehood and denial the fire of that sacred Tree, oblivious of the truth that no earthly water can quench the flames of Divine wisdom, nor mortal blasts extinguish the lamp of everlasting dominion. Nay, rather, such water cannot but intensify the burning of the flame, and such blasts cannot but ensure the preservation of the lamp, were ye to observe with the eye of discernment, and walk in the way of God's holy will and pleasure. . . .

And when the days of Moses were ended, and the light of Jesus, shining forth from the Day-Spring of the Spirit, encompassed the world, all the people of Israel arose in protest against Him. They clamored that He Whose advent the Bible had foretold must needs promulgate and fulfil the laws of Moses whereas this youthful Nazarene, who laid claim to the station of the divine Messiah, had annulled the law of divorce and of the sabbath day—the most weighty of all the laws of Moses. Moreover, what of the signs of the Manifestation yet to come? These people of Israel are even unto the present day still expecting that Manifestation which the Bible hath foretold! How many Manifestations of Holiness, how many Revealers of the light everlasting, have appeared since the time of Moses, and yet Israel, wrapt in the densest veils of satanic fancy and false imaginings, is still expectant that the idol of her own handiwork will appear with such signs as she herself hath conceived! Thus hath God laid hold of them for their sins, hath extinguished in them the spirit of faith, and tormented them with the flames of the nethermost fire. And this for no other reason except that Israel refused to apprehend the meaning of such words as have been revealed in the

Bible concerning the signs of the coming Revelation. As she never grasped their true significance, and, to outward seeming, such events never came to pass, she, therefore, remained deprived of recognizing the beauty of Jesus and of beholding the Face of God. And they still await His coming! From time immemorial even unto this day, all the kindreds and peoples of the earth have clung to such fanciful and unseemly thoughts, and thus have deprived themselves of the clear waters streaming from the springs of purity and holiness. . . .

To them that are endowed with understanding, it is clear and manifest that, when the fire of the love of Jesus consumed the veils of Jewish limitations, and His authority was made apparent and partially enforced, He, the Revealer of the unseen Beauty, addressing one day His disciples, referred unto His passing, and, kindling in their hearts the fire of bereavement, said unto them: "I go away and come again unto you." And in another place He said: "I go and another will come, Who will tell you all that I have not told you, and will fulfil all that I have said." Both these sayings have but one meaning, were ye to ponder upon the Manifestations of the Unity of God with Divine insight.

Every discerning observer will recognize that in the Dispensation of the Qur'án both the Book and the Cause of Jesus were confirmed. As to the matter of names, Muhammad, Himself, declared: "I am Jesus." He recognized the truth of the signs, prophecies, and words of Jesus, and testified that they were all of God. In this sense, neither the person of Jesus nor His writings hath differed from that of Muhammad and of His holy Book, inasmuch as both have championed the Cause of God, uttered His praise, and revealed His commandments. Thus it is that Jesus, Himself, declared: "I go away and come again unto you." Consider the sun. Were it to say now, "I am the sun of yesterday," it would speak the truth. And should it, bearing the sequence of time in mind, claim to be other than that sun, it still would speak the truth. In like manner, if it be said that all the days are but one and the same, it is correct and true. And if it be said, with respect to their particular names and designations, that they differ, that again is true. For though they are the same, yet one doth recognize in each a separate designation, a specific attribute, a particular character. Conceive accordingly the distinction, variation, and unity characteristic of the various Manifestations of holiness, that thou mayest comprehend the allusions made by the Creator of all names and attributes to the mysteries of distinction and unity, and discover the answer to thy question as to why that everlasting Beauty should have, at sundry times, called Himself by different names and titles. . . .

It is evident that changes brought about in every Dispensation constitute the dark clouds that intervene between the eye of man's understanding and the Divine Lumi-

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nary which shineth forth from the day-spring of the Divine Essence. Consider how men for generations have been blindly imitating their fathers, and have been trained according to such ways and manners as have been laid down by the dictates of their Faith. Were these men, therefore, to discover suddenly that a Man, Who hath been living in their midst, Who, with respect to every human limitation, hath been their equal, had risen to abolish every established principle imposed by their Faith—principles by which for centuries they have been disciplined, and every opposer and denier of which they have come to regard as infidel, profligate and wicked,—they would of a certainty be veiled and hindered from acknowledging His truth. Such things are as "clouds" that veil the eyes of those whose inner being hath not tasted the Salsabil of detachment, nor drunk from the Kawthar of the knowledge of God. Such men, when acquainted with those circumstances, become so veiled that, without the least question, they pronounce the Manifestation of God as infidel, and sentence Him to death. You must have heard of such things taking place all down the ages, and are now observing them in these days.

It behoveth us, therefore, to make the utmost endeavor, that, by God's invisible assistance, these dark veils, these clouds of Heaven-sent trials, may not hinder us from beholding the beauty of His shining Countenance, and that we may recognize Him only by His own Self.

This statement, by a great grandson of Bahá'u'lláh, was broadcast over the Columbia Broadcasting System network, from Station WABC, New York, on October 11, 1935.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE EAST TO WORLD CIVILIZATION

By Ruhi Afnán

It is venturesome to maintain that the mind of an Easterner is essentially different from that of a Westerner; that there are inherent qualities and capacities that distinguish them one from the other; but the fact still remains that whereas Western development has been in the direction of material civilization, the contribution of the East has been more along the spiritual line.

The expert knowledge, technique and specialization that has been produced in the West, especially in these

latter days, is a reality that will for ever stand to its credit and characterize its civilization. The discoveries of the laws of nature, the progress of science in all its different branches, the development of industry and its mass production, the perfection that is achieved in business methods, all are arresting to an Eastern visitor in a Western land, arouse his admiration and awaken his hope that some day the same forces may permeate Asia and Africa.

There is no reason why such potentialities residing in nature and in man should not be developed and manipulated to serve the peoples of the East. All they have to do is to enter the centers of learning in Europe and America and partake of the knowledge accumulated there. To develop man has to follow in the footsteps of those who have advanced farther on the road to progress, and for a period of time, acquire knowledge from them. Only by emulating the West, in its physical and economic development, can the East start to evolve, and gradually reach a point when it can turn back and begin to contribute its share to world civilization. The material development of Japan is a decisive proof confirming the efficacy of this process.

But just as the East has to acquire from the West industrialization, technique and the specialized branches of learning, so the West must turn to the East for the spiritual element that will lift its civilization, balance it, make it perfect and raise it to the rank of a culture.

It is idle to theorize on the reason why the great cultural movements of the world, the great revealed religions, such as Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity and Islám, have all sprung from the East and form the sources of the different cultural movements history records. I hesitate to suggest that the Eastern frame of mind makes it more susceptible to revelation, that the people of the Orient are a better channel through which God can express His Divine Will, that they are the chosen medium for regenerating mankind. But the facts are too glaring to be denied that all the cultures existing in the world today have sprung from revealed religions invariably born in the East.

Consider how the Christian spirit and teachings form the cultural background of Western civilization. The mode of thought, the basic moral principles that distinguish the European and American nations from the other peoples of the world, trace their source back to Jesus Christ; and this is a fact admitted by most students of Western culture. Jesus Christ introduced into the world a universal consciousness and outlook on life that permeated Roman thought and gradually remoulded its culture, as well as its legal system and institutions. It was the Christian spirit that balanced the Roman civilization and provided its true cultural element. There is much ground for doubt whether the influence of Rome upon the world and later civilizations would have been so great if the cultural and spiritual elements brought in by Christianity had been withheld; if Pagan Rome had not

been conquered and refashioned by the spirit of Jesus Christ. Westerners, however, often fail to remember that Jesus was a Jew, born and bred in Palestine which is an integral part of Asia. Because Islám supplanted Christianity in the Near East and drove it into Europe, we are often apt to identify Jesus so closely with Europe as to forget that He was an Oriental.

EVEN more outstanding and irrefutable is the influence of Muhammad and the Qur'án upon the culture that developed in the Near East and gradually spread its influence into Western lands. Not only did that religion start a new civilization of its own, and in the tenth and eleventh centuries, give rise to centers of learning such as Khorassan in Northern Persia, Baghdad and Spain, but also the Persian, Arab and Moorish culture, that had obtained their spirit and basic teachings from Islám, exerted a cultural influence upon countries that were purely Christian in Faith. The more we follow, with an unprejudiced mind, the study of Islám and the Renaissance, the more we find the influence the religion of Muhammad exerted upon European culture. Many of the earliest leaders of the Renaissance pursued their studies in Muhammadan countries and were infused with the spirit of Islám. Among them was St. Thomas Acquinus, who spent his early days in Spain learning philosophy from Moorish scholars. Spinoza was greatly influenced in his thought by the Jewish philosophers who flourished in the atmosphere of a Muhammadan culture. Many of the unbiased students of history today maintain that if the French had not actually won the battle of Tours, Europe would have not gone through the period called the Dark Ages. This shows the importance of the cultural influence of Islám when its spirit was still young and virile.

THE progress of modern science is a glowing example of what human intellect can achieve when freed from the fetters of outgrown dogmas and superstitions. The more man disentangled himself from medieval conceptions, the more he advanced and discovered the methods whereby he could use physical forces for his social and individual development.

But as our civilization is more along material and industrial lines, as its drift has been increasingly away from true religion and spirituality, that cultural element has shown itself to be disturbingly lacking. The attention of the world has been directed towards the development of industry and commerce, towards the growth of technique and specialized study that is conducive to human well-being upon this earth. Much less importance has been attached to cultural values and the unfoldment of the spiritual faculties of man. Can a civilization be considered a true culture when the spiritual destiny of man is ignored, when values are distorted and perverted? Can a truly cultured humanity perpetrate international crimes and cause the death of millions as we are doing?

Science has laid at our disposal

great forces that may be used for the betterment of humanity, but they are actually employed to destroy life and impoverish peoples. The curse of mankind in this day is that material civilization has progressed by leaps and bounds while spiritual culture has been dragging behind. We have obtained a detailed and accurate knowledge of many of the forces that operate in our physical universe but have not reached a true and proper understanding as to the goal of our moral and spiritual development, as to the purpose for which we were created and the direction in which we ought to develop. These are aspects of a true cultural life that is still unborn.

AGAIN can the East come to the front and contribute, as on previous occasions, its cultural element to world civilization. It is only by acknowledging and accepting this worthy contribution the East can make in this day, that Europe and America will be able to perfect their material civilization and give it a cultural and finishing touch.

Being too near to the origin of the Bahá'í Faith, which arose during the middle of the last century in Persia, we are apt to underestimate its value. In time we may obtain a better perspective and a more accurate method to appraise its importance. But even now it can be taken into consideration and its value recognized. It undoubtedly possesses a rich cultural value for all the civilized world.

Consider, for example, the goal of the oneness of mankind which it establishes as an ideal for all the peoples of the world. Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of this new Faith that has arisen in the Orient, proclaims: "Do we see your kings and rulers lavishing their treasures more freely on means for the destruction of the human race than on that which would conduce to the happiness of mankind . . . This strife and this bloodshed and discord must cease, and all men be as one kindred and one family . . . Let not a man glory in this, that he loves his country; let him rather glory in this, that he loves his kind . . . "

With such a cultural ideal before us, with such a universal spirit to stimulate our inner emotions, narrow nationalism and its devastating influences can be overcome. Then the forces of nature harnessed by man, which now are employed for purposes of destruction and self-aggrandizement, can be used to strengthen the bonds that unite the human family. These forces could then be made to operate for furthering the conception of world unity and the brotherhood of man.

If this cultural movement (again sprung from the East), should be employed as the ideal of Western material civilization, as the spiritual force that is to animate it and direct its course, then, instead of dissipating our life along unworthy pursuits we will build up a nobler home in this world and make ready for the worlds to come. This is a practical idealism which will absorb youth and guide its footsteps.

We are born in this world with a spirit that is a store-house of infinite potentialities; with the capacity to develop these potentialities and re-

flect the rich and glorious attributes of God. Should we bear this cultural principle in mind, should we recognize the fact that we have more than a physical being, should we become conscious of the fact that the purpose of all creation is the spiritual development of man, then we will take life more seriously and joyously and concentrate our attention upon things vital and uplifting.

If the East and the West should each contribute its share along these lines destined by God; should they bear in mind that they are indebted and in need one of the other, then they would build up the future civilization in such a manner that both the material and cultural elements would be incorporated—elements indispensable for the richness and beauty of the whole. Then we will behold the true Kingdom of God, foretold by all the prophets, which constitutes the ideal world state the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh tries to establish upon earth.

RESURRECTION

By Alice Simmons Cox

From some Stygian cavern,
  Out of oblivion brought,
  By faithful hands, a jewel
Is wrought.

Beginning, a bubbling wood-spring,
  Then a brook in a flowered lea,
  The swelling stream flows onward,
To the sea.

Bursting cortical encasements,
  Released by the winter's sod,
  Green grass blades shoot upward,
For God.

Awaiting some magical moment
  In accord with creation's plan,
  All nature seeks fulfillment
In man,—

Who out of his earthly temple,
  Up from the womb of night,
  Will take his soul by the Love-road,
To Light.

Religious prejudice has been responsible for developing political and economic institutions into the weapons of mass competition instead of the tools of world unity. The historic rift between Christianity and Islam has been the source of the most inveterate and enduring prejudice affecting modern civilization. "The Story of Islam" is a contribution to mutual understanding written by an Arab who accepts the oneness of divine revelation.

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THE STORY OF ISLAM

By Zia M. Bagdadi

INTRODUCTION

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The knowledge which Muhammadans and Christians have of each other's religion is based upon the ignorance, prejudice and superstition which both have inherited from the past. The best word a Muhammadan has for his Christian brother is "Infidel" and the Christian's best word for the Muhammadan is "Heathen." Why does the Muslim use this term for the Christian? "I was a savage heathen worshipping idols before the appearance of the Prophet Muhammad. He guided me and taught me to worship God, the living God, and to believe in the true Prophets, Abraham, Moses and Christ. He broke my idols and commanded me to love Jews and Christians, because they, too, were taught to believe in God and His Holy Book; but Christians and Jews not only deny my Prophet and His Book, the Qur'an, but call Him imposter and demand that I denounce Him who revealed to me their brotherhood and the divine nature of their Prophets.

"Moreover, Christians call Jesus the Son of God and Lord, as if there were more than the one God, and their churches are filled with statues and images like the idols I worshipped of yore. It is for these reasons that I call them 'Infidel' since they deny the Truth."

For his part, the Christian says: "Muhammad spread his religion with the sword and promoted polygamy; his followers worship Allah and not God. Jesus performed miracles, but Muhammad failed to perform the miracle of commanding the mountain to come to him. Therefore we reject this prophet."

An unbiassed mind can understand what ignorance is the root of this tragic mutal antagonism.

Had the Muslim understood the meaning of the trinity he would not have termed the Christian "Infidel." On the other hand, Christians them-

selves likewise do not grasp the real meaning of the divinity of Christ, even after they have divided into so many sects because of their different interpretations.

Bahá'u'lláh has taught that God is infinite and unlimited, therefore no finite and limited human mind can or will ever comprehend Him. Therefore God creates a supreme being in a human temple to reflect His qualities and attributes, as the splendor of the sun is reflected in the pure mirror. All these beings are the Prophets, the reflectors, the Manifestations of God, and to know Them and love Them is to know and love God. Just as the sun, its rays and the mirror are three, yet also one, so God, the Holy Spirit and His Prophet are Three, yet also One.

Let us consider the important factors that have turned the Christian against the Muslim.

One is the fact that certain missionaries through unfounded statements planted the roots of misunderstanding and prejudice so deeply into western hearts that nothing short of the power of God can eradicate them. For example, think of the common expression, "If the mountain does not go to Muhammad, then Muhammad goes to the mountain," a saying whose literal interpretation ridicules the Prophet. The real truth is that Muhammad did say to the mountain, come, and the mountain came, but it was not a mountain of earth and stone but a mountain of unbelievers who, in their millions, obeyed Him and came to bow down before Him.

Another cause of misunderstanding, and one produced by Muhammadans themselves, which barred the people of the Occident from grasping the fundamental teachings of the Qur'an was the fact that Islam has forbidden the translation of its Holy Book from its original Arabic tongue. Their attitude has been that the Qur'an is in itself a divine miracle whose spiritual eloquence and force would be lost in any translation. From this fact has come the unfortunate circumstance that few Christians know Muhammad's teachings except at second-hand, and between them and the Founder of Islam were many veils of ecclesiastical and race prejudice. What translations were available failed to convey the correct meaning.

From ignorant Muhammadans came another cause of confusion. In trying to exalt their Prophet by their own human standards, they have attributed to Him such miracles as the cleaving of the moon, the growth of a palm tree from a camel's back at His command whenever He wanted dates, the conquering power of His sword, and the size of His harem.

No wonder that non-believers are shocked by such statements and claims, or that these words are used by the prejudiced to turn their hearers against Islam. The cleaving of the moon, the darkening of the sun, the falling of the stars were in reality symbols of the events which took place as a result of the Prophet's appearance. He rent asunder the moon of idolatry, He darkened the sun of false belief, and He cast down the proud stars of the existing superstition. But in the western mind a false image of Muhammad has been

engraved — a terrible Arab with bloody sword, a sensualist with a large harem.

Even the ignorant Muhammadan does not recall that his ancestors before Muhammad were polygamists without limit in law or religion, but Muhammad stopped this practice, which sanctioned the murder of unwanted female children, giving His people a marriage law adapted to the conditions of people in that age, limiting each man to four wives but revealing the justice of marrying only one.

I

The word Islam is the proper term for the Muhammadan religion, designating peace and complete submission to God. The term Muslim means follower of the religion of Islam.

Muhammad, Founder of the Faith, was born in Mecca, Arabia, on August 20, 570 A. D. He was the only son of Abdu'llah of the family of Hashim, leaders of the tribe of Quraysh, which were guardians of the Ka'bih, the Temple of Mecca, containing the black stone said to have been given by an angel to Abraham.

Even as a youth, Muhammad displayed spiritual qualities and virtues, and attracted the attention of the people. For example: on one occasion the Arabian chiefs met at Mecca and decided to decorate the Ka'bih, but came to dispute on the question of who should have the honor of carrying the sacred stone to a temporary resting place. It was finally agreed to postpone decision until the next day, when whoever came earliest to pray at the shrine should be chosen judge of the dispute. It was Muhammad upon whom the choice fell. He spread a large blanket beside the stone, had the chiefs all take hold of it, and placed the stone upon the blanket to be transported by all without distinction.

Like his father, Muhammad made his living by trading camels and sheep, traveling not only in Arabia but in Iraq, Syria and Palestine. His integrity in business affairs was recognized by the title "the truthful and faithful."

At the age of twenty-five Muhammad was engaged by Khadijih, a rich widow, to manage her business affairs, and later married her. Muhammad immediately set free the colored household slaves.

In those days the Arabs, who were descendants of Abraham and of Shem, the son of Noah, were submerged in the sea of darkness and ignorance. Their religion was Sabeanism, which included star worship, and Mecca, recognized as the chief center of their idolatry, was the object of annual pilgrimage. The art of poetry was held in honor before Muhammad's time, and contests were held at Mecca in addition to their idolatry and sacrifice recalling the ruder scenes of the Old Testament.

The most honored enterprise, however, was war, and polygamy the most firmly established social custom. Since nomadic and desert life could not be encumbered with too many girl children, many were buried alive. Even the famous 'Umar, before conversion to Islam, committed this cruel act.

Despite this crudeness of development, the Arabs had many admirable qualities — generosity, hospitality,

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courage and loyalty. Physically they were extremely powerful.

The inspiration of Prophethood came to Muhammad in this way. During his fortieth year he spent forty days in a cave in the hills near Mecca in fasting, prayer and meditation. To him came the Holy Spirit, in that age represented by the symbol of the angel Gabriel, saying: "Read, in the name of your Lord who is He that creates! He created man from the embryo. Read! Your Lord is the most generous; it is He who guides the pen. He taught the human mind all that it knew not . . . Today I have completed your religion and made it Islam (Peace)."

With the power of inspiration in his heart, the Prophet declared His mission to Khadijih, and His wife became the first believer. The next to accept was 'Ali, a cousin, a youth of seventeen, outstanding among these of his generation. The household servant, Zayd—the only one who had refused the offer of freedom—became the third believer. The fourth follower, Abu-Bakr, a rich and elderly merchant, overhead a scoffing remark that Khadijih was insane enough to tell people that Muhammad was the Prophet of God, whereupon he gave instant recognition. The next to believe was Abu-Talib, Muhammad's uncle and father of the youth 'Ali.

Of Muhammad's people 'Abdu'l-Bahá has written the following: "These Arab tribes were in the lowest depths of savagery and barbarism, and in comparison with them the savages of Africa and wild Indians of America were as advanced as a Plato. The savages of America do not bury their children alive as these Arabs did their daughters, glorying in it as being an honorable thing to do . . . Further, a man was permitted to take a thousand women, and most men had more than ten wives in their household. When these tribes made war, the one which was victorious would take the women and children of the vanquished tribe captive, and treat them as slaves . . . Moreover, the means by which these Arab tribes lived consisted in pillage and robbery, so that they were perpetually engaged in fighting and war, killing one another, plundering and devastating each other's property, and capturing women and children, whom they would sell to strangers."[1]

(*To be continued*)

1—Some Answered Questions, p. 23-24.

In animal and plant evolution, progress seems to come from the slow process of random or chance variation, with survival of those types which happen to vary favorably. If directional evolution does exist, it may result from selective survival of chance tendencies.

In human affairs a different process is emerging. Intelligence can forecast results, and to some degree can limit innovations to those which probably will be desirable . . . Human affairs, though more complicated than dams and bridges, are subject to design, and need not suffer all the waste of blind chance experiment. Conscious design in social organization must increase.

—A. E. MORGAN, in Antioch Notes.

The student of today is educated in all knowledge except that which teaches one how to live. The art of life can be acquired only from the Prophet, whose example, inspiration and teaching constitutes the path to reality, renewed in every age.

•

THE SCIENCE OF RIGHT LIVING!

By MAYME SETO

•

JOHN D. BARRY, newspaper columnist, points out the great need for a course in our universities and colleges on the art of living. Quoting in part from an article on education he says:

"Occasionally I receive news of work done by schools, colleges and universities. The range of subjects is astonishing. How it has increased since I was a student myself.

"There are those schools of business administration, for instance. I've lately been talking with a graduate of the one at Harvard. It's like a university in itself. It gives the student thorough equipment for the exactions of business life. Till the slump came it had no difficulty in offering the graduates good positions. It would be appealed to by firms that recognized the value of training and believed the graduates were likely to be of superior intelligence. Often it would be visited by businessmen that wanted to look the students over. Even now it has a good many requests for workers.

"In all those institutions, however, I never hear of a course that deals with the most important of all subjects, knowing how to live."

This writer is asking for what has been most completely given in the Bahá'í teachings, and there alone may it be found. Bahá'u'lláh has given us the code for personal conduct, and principles governing our actions in group association, the latter a thing of the highest and greatest need in the world today. He has made clear our relationship and duty to God, to man, and to society. We have but to practice His teachings to find a new and glorious way of living.

On one occasion when 'Abdu'l-Bahá was asked, by a seeker after truth, what was the best way to give the message to people; in reply 'Abdu'l-Bahá's face became very serious, his voice, emphatic, as He answered in these words:

"The first thing to do is to acquire a thirst for spirituality, then live the life, live the life, live the life! The way to acquire this thirst is to meditate upon the future life. Study the Holy Words, read your Bible, read

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the Holy Books, especially study the Holy Utterances of Bahá'u'lláh; prayer and meditation, take much time for these two. Then you will know this great thirst and then only can you begin to live the Life.

"To live the life you must be the very kindest woman, you must be the most pure, you must be absolutely truthful, and live a perfectly moral life.

"Visit your neighbors when they are sick or in trouble, offer your services to them, try to show them that you are longing to serve them.

"Feed the poor, divide what you have. Be content to remain where God has placed you; be faithful in your care of those to whom He has trusted you. *Never waver* in this. Show by your life that you have something different so that all will see and will say 'What has this person that I have not'? Show the world that in spite of the utmost suffering, poverty, sickness, you have something which gives you comfort, strength and peace; that you are happy—serene—satisfied with all that is in your life.

"Then they, too, will want what you possess—and will need no further teaching—after you tell them what it is!"[1]

And on another occasion He wrote:

"The most advisable thing, therefore, is to discuss pure and sanctified living, universal brotherhood and the philosophy of universal religion. As to the promulgation of truth, verily it is divine and heavenly character, action in accordance with the divine and merciful instructions, and the propagation among men of Lordly behests and exhortations."

And again: "The world is wrong just because people talk too much and do not carry out their ideals. If action took the place of words the world would change very soon. A man who does good and does not talk about it is perfect."[2]

"Therefore it is incumbent upon all Bahá'ís to ponder this delicate and vital matter in their hearts, that unlike other religions, they may not content themselves with the noise, the clamor, the hollowness of religious doctrine. Nay, rather, they should exemplify in every aspect of their lives the attributes and virtues that are born of God, and should arise to distinguish themselves by their goodly behavior. They should justify their claim to be Bahá'ís by deeds, not by name."[3]

THERE is a power in the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, the power of the Holy Spirit which is for our use, and if we neglect to practise the teachings in our every day life, the Bahá'í Faith remains a mere name and not a power transforming lives and lifting us into a higher state of consciouness, thereby transcending all personal limitations.

Living the life according to the commands of Bahá'u'lláh brings out the powers of the intellect, and latent noble qualities in the heart of man. "And these qualities of the heart are contagious" says 'Abdu'l-Bahá. It is in this way and this way alone that the world can be changed, and the world will be changed only when the human or natural qualities of the heart are supplanted by the divine qualities.

1—Quoted in The Bahái Magazine, June, 1928.
2—Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
3—Reality of Religion.

"The power of the Holy Spirit heals both material and spiritual ills."[4]

Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Cause, reaffirming this all-important truth writes as follows:

"Not by the force of our numbers, not by the mere exposition of a set of new and noble principles, not by an organized campaign of teaching, no matter how world-wide and elaborate in its character, not even by the staunchness of our faith or the exaltation of our enthusiasm, can we ultimately hope to vindicate in the eyes of a critical and skeptical age the supreme claim of the Abhá Revelation. One thing and only one thing will unfailingly and alone secure the undoubted triumph of this sacred cause—namely, the extent to which our own inner life and private character mirror forth in their manifold aspects the splendor of those eternal principles proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh."[5]

And in The "Dispensation of Bahá'u'llah," Shoghi Effendi writes:

"For upon our present-day efforts, and above all upon the extent to which we strive to remodel our lives after the pattern of sublime heroism associated with those gone before us, must depend the efficacy of the instruments we now fashion, instruments that must erect the structure of that blissful commonwealth which must signalize the Golden Age of our Faith."

A NEW and high standard has been set for life in the New Day, and man, if he is to find his place therein and enjoy it, must conform to this divine standard. In "Hidden Words" Bahá'u'lláh writes the following regarding this standard:

"O! Children of Adam! Holy words and pure and goodly deeds ascend unto the heaven of celestial glory; strive that haply your deeds may be cleansed from the dust of self and pretense and find favor at the court of glory; for ere long the assayers of mankind shall in the Holy Presence of the adored One accept naught but the essence of virtue and pure and holy deeds. This is the day star of wisdom and divine mystery, that hath shone above the horizon of the divine will. Well is it with them that turn thereunto."

Edward Bellamy in his book "Looking Backward" wrote of the condition of life in about the year 2000, showing clearly how the old attitude of selfishness must give way to nobler qualities:

"As in the old society the generous, the just, the tender hearted had been placed at a disadvantage by the possession of those qualities, so in the new society the cold hearted, the greedy, the self-seeking found themselves out of joint with the world. Now the condition of life for the first time ceased to operate as a forcing process to develop the brutal qualities of human nature, and the premium which had heretofore encouraged selfishness, was not only removed, but placed upon unselfishness; it was for the first time possible to see what unperverted human nature really was like. The depraved tendencies which had previously overgrown and obscured the better to so large an extent, now withered like cellar fungi in the

4—Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era, by Esslemont.
5—Bahá'í Administration.

open air and the nobler qualities showed a sudden luxuriance which turned cynics into panegyrists and for the first time in human history tempted mankind to fall in love with itself. Soon was fully revealed what divines and philosophers of the old world never would have believed, that human nature in its essential qualities is good, not bad, that men by their natural intention and structure are generous, not selfish, pitiful, not cruel, sympathetic not arrogant, godlike in aspiration, instinct, with divinest impulses to tenderness and self-sacrifice, images of God indeed, not the travesties upon Him they had seemed."

The right way of living is brought about by the power of the Holy Spirit, and this help is ours on condition that we have a new mental attitude based upon the teachings of the Manifestation of God, adjusting our daily actions to the divine standard set by Him.

"It is possible so to adjust one's self to the practice of nobility that its atmosphere surrounds and colors every act. When actions are habitually and conscientiously adjusted to noble standards, with no thought of the words that might herald them, then nobility becomes the accent of life. At such a degree of evolution one scarcely need try any longer to be good. All acts are become the distinctive expression of nobility."[6]

6—Bahá'í Scriptures, par. 822.

PRAYER

by Doris Holley

Let us want everything and nothing,
And only that elusive fire
That burns our wayward consciousness
Into the flow of Thy desire;
That melts the metal of our minds
From separate sparks to liquid flame
And lights the Inner Light;
And melts in tears the veil that hides from sight
  The path—the home—the end—
That is Thy Name.

Art is a most sensitive index to the life of the spirit in a community, and in this review of the work by Dr. Counts we see this index applied to the development of America from the days of colonial crafts.

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SOCIAL TRENDS IN AMERICAN LIFE

8. ART

By BERTHA HYDE KIRKPATRICK

•

WE come now in our survey of the development of the social institutions and agencies in America and of the forces influencing this development to the field of art. This field is perhaps the most sensitive index we have of the life of the spirit in a community or nation. It quickly responds to new spiritual energies by giving new creations. In its every phase it is closely connected with the life of a people. "Art is commensurate with life," says Professor Counts. "However common may be the view that art is an esoteric interest pursued by strangely gifted persons, the fact remains that it cannot be considered apart from the ordinary concerns of ordinary men and women. Every human activity possesses an artistic quality. . . . . Indeed the entire life of a people may be judged according to canons of art, according to standards of grace and charm and beauty."[1]

It has been commonly held that the atmosphere of America has not been a congenial one for the development of the artistic spirit. So firmly has this belief been held that it has been customary for Americans who have felt the burning of artistic genius to go to Europe for inspiration where they have imitated European art. But using the term art in this broad sense it seems clear that during the first two hundred years of her history America was developing an artistic tradition and her artisans and craftsmen were producing articles for use which were truly beautiful.

In spite, then, of the handicaps of pioneer life and constant westward migration the instinct to create and to create something beautiful which seems inherent in human nature developed and bore fruit in American life. It seems natural that these impulses should reach their fullest development in the longer settled and more permanent communities of the New England and other Atlantic colonies. The dignified colonial architecture of church buildings and pri-

1—Social Foundation of Education. Geo. S. Counts, Scribners, p. 347.

vate homes, the well-planned and beautiful New England village, the well-designed utensils, furniture, textiles, and embroideries all bear witness that aesthetic qualities were not lacking in young and growing America.

Of the work of the eighteenth century craftsmen Suzanne La Follette writes most appreciatively: "Silver, pewter, wrought iron, and brass followed the prevailing fashions. Not again have metals been wrought into such beautiful forms as in the silver tea services, chafing dishes, porringers, candlesticks, ladles, and other objects of this century; the brass warming pans, sconces, andirons, candlesticks, furniture mounts; the wrought iron gates and railings, hinges, knockers, and utensils. It was the heydey of the craftsman, his final glorious period of achievement, before the triumphal invasion of his province by the industrial revolution."[2]

But artistic expression was not confined to the colonies of the Atlantic seaboard, according to the authors Eberlein and McClure who write, "It is plain to be seen that every part of our country settled before the third decade of the nineteenth century has some share in early craft development, some point of interest, some cause of proper local pride."[3]

What the destructive forces of the machine age did to this growing art Professor Counts graphically describes: "Under the impact of new forces the household economy melted away, the community lost its integrity, the machine destroyed the craftsman, a predatory individualism rose to economic dominance, men became devoted to money making, and a new ruling class, product of the commercial spirit, displaced the colonial aristocracy. Increasingly men produced, not for use, but for the market, for profit. Thus the foundations of the artistic tradition, which had taken form during two centuries, were demolished."[4]

The effect of these new forces on art are most vividly set out by T. F. Hamlin: "Land speculation in new and growing cities . . . was inevitable, and brought the idea of cheapness into building as it had never been brought before. Cheap materials, cheap construction, speed, speed, speed, quick turnover and large profits—such an ideal leads to no great art. It breaks down the very foundation of creative design; it struck also the deathblow of the Greek revival, and there was nothing to take its place."[5] It seems indeed as we look backward upon the outward evidence that the middle and latter part of the nineteenth century was a time in which the finer, spiritual qualities were in the far background. Suzanne LaFollette interprets this period as one in which the whole life of the people "was undergoing an unprecedented dissolution and readjustment," and one in which an inability to do anything creative in art indicated a "spiritual chaos."[6]

And strangely, while the power to create the beautiful was at its ebb, art was not forgotten. Interest in it took on a new phase. Those who amassed great fortunes through the

2 - 3—Ibid, Quoted on p. 360.
4—Ibid, p. 361.
5—Ibid, Quoted on p. 362.
6—Ibid, Quoted on p. 366.

exploitation of the poor became, in a sense, patrons of art. They endowed great museums, purchased costly collections of art, and imported rare and old masterpieces from Europe. In this connection Professor Counts finds one of the deep-lying contradictions of our times when "shops whose shelves are loaded with cheap and shoddy goods" stand "beside museums wherein are collected the art objects of the past."[7]

Of such conditions 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote, "On the one hand is to be seen the embellishment and luxury made possible through illicit wealth, and on the other hand, the ravishing of this mortal world of its beautiful appearance."[8]

But are there no signs of a revival of the things of the spirit in American life and art? Is it not true that if an old age is dying just as truly a new one is being born? We should expect the field of art, subtly sensitive to the hidden spiritual forces, to be one of the first to respond. And indeed there is evidence of new life both in old and new fields of art. New creations, and sometimes beautiful and worthy ones, are appearing in music, painting, sculpture, drama, poetry, and architecture, while such new inventions as the cinema and radio are struggling between crude and cumbersome adaptations of the old art and inspiring hints of the emerging new.

It is, however, in architecture that we find the most marked manifestations of the spirit of the new age. Obviously one reason is that this is the field that naturally makes use of the new methods and materials which science, invention, and discovery have provided. Steel, concrete, and glass, new understanding and skill in construction engineering, make possible forms, plans, and appearances in buildings hitherto undreamed of. The buildings of the Century of Progress exposition furnish an example familiar to all. So new and strange were the buildings in design and color that when among them one seemed in an unfamiliar world, yet they were wonderfully adapted for the use for which each was intended. Compared to the chaste beauty of the buildings of the World's Fair of forty years previous these buildings seemed to many crude and without charm, but the former were after all imitative, inspired by the classic, the old, while the latter, freed almost entirely from laws and materials which bound and limited the old, were creative and indicative of the new age.

But while marked and important changes are taking place in modern commercial and domestic architecture most of the religious architecture still clings to the old. There is however one outstanding building which embodies new laws and materials and which is at the same time inspiringly beautiful. This is the Bahá'í House of Worship at Wilmette, Illinois. Not only because it reveals new forms in religious architecture is the building of interest and importance but because its whole structure in form and ornamentation is symbolic of a new social religion which meets completely the needs of the new age.

BEAUTIFULLY located in an open space overlooking Lake Michigan and within a sweeping bend of

7—Ibid, p. 522.
8—Star of the West, vol. IV, p. 273.

Sheridan Road this religious edifice dominates its immediate surroundings. In shape it is a nonegon and its nine great ribs of steel and concrete meet at a point at the summit of the dome and furnish a frame-work for the sides and roof of glass which is really the fabric of the building. In design and in fact it is a temple of light, quite contradicting the old idea of dim religious light, of obscurity and semi-darkness so often associated with present-day and ancient houses of worship. So the day of obscure and hidden religious teaching is past and today the pure light of the religion of God is shed on mankind through the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh.

Over the glass dome and clerestory has been placed lovely tracery work done in crystalline white artificial stone. When completed the whole exterior and interior will be similarly ornamented, so that pure sunlight in beautiful shadowy patterns will stream into the great auditorium symbolic of the outpouring of illumination which God is sending into the hearts and intellects in order that men may have wisdom to build a new and better world.

Again in its nine approaches, with nine welcoming doors open to people of every nation, creed, and race, as well as in the intertwining curves of of its ornamentation, this building stands for the one universal religion and the oneness of mankind. These are necessary foundations of the new age.

But this bright and shining light of the new religion must not end in religious worship, else it will soon become cold formalism. It must be warm and penetrating. As the rays of our physical sun penetrate the earth and make it bring forth fruit so this new religion must bear fruit in social institutions. Therefore around the central house of worship will be erected buildings of service, schools for study and research in science, homes for the aged, the sick, and infirm, for the orphans and the indigent, a hospice for travelers, buildings indeed for administering all the affairs of the Bahá'í Community.

Commenting upon the significance and importance of this whole group of buildings Shoghi Effendi has written: "Nothing short of direct and constant interaction between the spiritual forces emanating from this House of Worship centering in the heart of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, and the energies consciously displayed by those who administer its affairs in their service to humanity can possibly provide the necessary agency capable of removing the ills that have so long and so grievously afflicted humanity."[9]

TURNING once more to a consideration of the Temple as a work of art what relation has it to American art? Can we say that this is American architecture in the sense that it has grown out of the life of the people? American society today is chaotic, without a guiding plan, while this Bahá'í temple stands for a very definite plan for the future not only of America but of the world. The institution of the Mashriqu'l Adhkár* established by Bahá'u'lláh belongs truly to no country or nation. The first of such a group of buildings was

9—Bahá'í World, Vol. IV, p. 216.
*—Term applied to the whole group of buildings.

erected in Ishqabad, Russia, and similar groups will eventually be erected all over the world. But the design of this particular house of worship at Wilmette, universal though it is in meaning, is the creation of an American artist and is being built and decorated by American skill and genius. Indeed we can hardly imagine that it could have been conceived, much less constructed, in any other country than America. The conception of the new world order born though it was in the East moved irresistibly west, to America. Again, as in the case of Christianity the illumination which arose in the east "hath acquired in the West an extraordinary brilliancy."[10]

Too little do we understand the underlying forces which have brought forth this temple in America. Surely the constructive forces which we have noted working in America from the beginning have not come to naught. Rather they have been laying the foundation for the future. The recent and present destructive forces, violent and overpowering, are necessary to sweep away the false and dangerous which are so apparent in American society today. Underneath lie unifying and constructive forces whose source is beyond our understanding. An aid in opening our eyes to the fountain of these forces is found in the statement made by its architect, the late Louis J. Bourgeois. He himself disavowed any claim to be its originator. "Its inception," he said, "was not from man." He himself was "a receiver by whose means a heavenly melody is transmitted, a new idea given to the world."

Whether considered then as a piece of inspired architecture, as a universal house of worship, or as the beginning of new social institutions and symbolic of America's part in establishing these, the deep significance of this unique and beautiful edifice cannot be over-estimated. No one who carefully investigates its meaning and the meaning of the Faith for which it stands can doubt that however imperfectly understood at present and however undeveloped, herein lies the hope of the future, the potent germ of the new world order.

10—Words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

The idea that indiscriminate massacres are written in the book of the Fates is worthy of the darkest age; and yet the type of action that gives promise of preventing it is still only partially assured. Failure to complete the international organization for thwarting the powers of darkness would be the culminating tragedy of modern times. That which encourages the hope that such a fate can be averted is the evolution that created modern states and has recently brought them into more and more intimate relations.—

JOHN BATES CLARK, in A Tender of Peace

A WORLD FAITH

"That which the Lord hath ordained as the sovereign remedy and mightiest instrument for the healing of all the world is the union of all its peoples in one universal Cause, one common Faith."

—BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

HUMAN progress halts on the brink of the chasm which yawns between a religious ideal laid upon the individual, and a social necessity which lies upon the mass.

Every effort by men to restate personal religion as social gospel entangles the soul more deeply in the meshes of a civilization founded upon war and developed by strife.

This all-pervading conflict between personality and society is resolved in the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, which identify a World Order with the principle of the Oneness of Mankind. How these Teachings clarify the otherwise chaotic movements of a distracted age will be evident to those who read World Order magazine.

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